(c) to what extent Government have eroded and diluted the system and procedures invalued in giving environmental and forest clearances;

(d) whether Government proposes to scrap the total system; and

(e) the schedule of such scrapping of the requirements for clearances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. During the last two years (01.08.2004 to 31.07.2006) 65 irrigation projects involving diversion of forest land have been granted approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, while 6 irrigation projects have been rejected on merit and 14 proposals have been closed/returned for want of requisite information. In case of environmental clearance, only new major irrigation projects require environmental clearance under EIA Notification of 1994.Medium irrigation projects do not require environmental clearance. During the last two years, 26 irrigation proposals have been granted environmental clearance.

(b) No, Sir. The proposals requiring diversion of forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are examined by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted under Section-3 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Similarly, the proposals requiring environmental clearance are also examined by Expert Committees. On the recommendations of these Committees, the forestry clearance or the environmental clearance is granted by the Central Government.

(c) No erosion and dilution of the system and procedure involved in giving environmental and forestry clearance has taken place.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Question does not arise.

National River Conservation Plan in Orissa

1850. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how many towns have been considered under National River Conservation Plan on river Mahanadi in Orissa;

(b) how much funds have been sanctioned for this plan in Orissa;

(c) whether there is any plan to include more towns from Orissa in next Plan period; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) One town namely, Cuttack, has been included under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) on river Mahanadi in Orissa. The sanctioned cost for various pollution abatement works in this town is Rs. 14.04 crore.

(c) and (d) Inclusion of additional towns in the next Plan period under the NRCP would depend upon availability of necessary outlay, the necessity of such projects and willingness of the State Government to bear 30% of the total project cost.

Permission of Bt. brinjal

† 1851. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to take help of foreign companies to promote genetically modified (GM) farming;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that Government are considering to allow the farming of Bt. brinjal a patent of an American Company Monsento into in the country;

(c) if so, whether any study has been conducted by Government on this effects of GM crops keeping in view the issues related to health, environment and the social and financial status of our farmers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) No Sir. However, M/s Mahyco an Indian company has developed a Bt. brinjal which is resistant to the fruit and shoot borer. The Bt. gene has been developed by M/s Monsanto, an American Company and licensed to M/s Mahyco. The application of M/s Mahyco for conduct of large scale field trials of Bt. brinjal develped by M/s Mahyco is under cosideration of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) notified under Rules 1989 of the Environmental Protection Act, 1986.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.